

# SPRINGSTIMES

Your Sandy Springs News Source

## Greetings!



Sometimes we are beset by nostalgia and wishful thinking. For example, when land is cleared for redevelopment (as is the case at the corner of Glenridge Drive and High Point Road), folks lament about trees being cut down to make room for new construction. Of course it is sad to see healthy, tall trees come down, and there are some folks who feel the City should just hold the line against future development and keep the tree cover.

But things are not that clear cut. (No pun intended.) When a commercial site is outmoded, has lost its tenants and is no longer up to modern standards, the owners of the site have a constitutional right to redevelop their property. At Glenridge, the approved use is "mixed use," which allows a combination of residential and retail, or in some instances, of office and residential. So long as the site accommodates the necessary green space requirement, as well as the needed parking, the property owner has a legal right to use the land for mixed use.

When we see the trees come down we grieve, but we don't stop to think how quickly trees grow. The redevelopment must plant trees back. They are small but they will grow. If the tree ordinance was violated when the bulldozers cleared the land, the developer must make amends through fines or contributions to the tree bank. My own home site was barren when we built 18 years ago. Today, I have a hard time growing roses because the trees cast a shade in the afternoons. Actually the tree canopy over Sandy Springs is in good shape.

Now let me address the "wishful thinking." I had a constituent recently who emphasized the need to bury the power lines along Roswell Road for cosmetic reasons. This has been on the front burner for many years. But always the cost of doing so creates a major hurdle. The cost of burying the power lines runs between \$1-2 million per mile. Thus, for Roswell Road, just from Johnson Ferry to Abernathy, it would cost \$6 million. This is for the low voltage (distribution) lines, not the humongous high voltage (transmission) lines. Our property tax collection for one year runs about \$32.4 million. Obviously dedicating a major proportion of our revenue to bury the lines would cut into the possibility of the other capital improvements (street paving, sidewalks and traffic signals.)

We are looking at a creative alternative to burying the power lines on Roswell Road: moving them to the back of properties. This was the approach taken in the stretch of Roswell Road that was already improved from Hilderbrand Drive to Hammond Drive. This is an example of wishful thinking combined with practical reality.

Mayor Eva Galambos, PhD  
City of Sandy Springs

## New Sidewalks For City

Pedestrian needs across the City of Sandy Springs are being met with more than six miles of sidewalk construction since the City's inception. This year, contracts are being executed for \$6.3M in sidewalk projects throughout the City. In addition, the City has Capital streetscape and intersection projects above and beyond the Sidewalk Program. They include Sandy Springs Circle and Johnson Ferry Streetscapes. Below are updates on the projects contractors are working on:

### Lake Forest Elementary School Sidewalk

Construction is underway to build a sidewalk along Lake Forrest Drive from the I-285 underpass to Hammond Drive. This will provide improved pedestrian access within the neighborhood. The project includes improvements to the intersection of Lake Forrest Drive and Hammond Drive.

### Ridgeview Middle School (Peachtree-Dunwoody Road) Sidewalk

Construction is underway to construct a sidewalk system along Peachtree-Dunwoody Road in the vicinity of the school. Utility relocation is underway.

### Spalding Charter Elementary School (Brandon Mill/Dalrymple) Sidewalk

The project has begun after utility relocation was completed.

### Community Development Block Grant Sidewalk Infrastructure Design

A design contract is underway to develop a complete sidewalk system along

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# River Response Team Ready for Duty



*Members of the Sandy Springs River Rescue team train regularly. The team is comprised of members from both Sandy Springs' Police and Fire Departments.*

The Sandy Springs Police and Fire Rescue Departments River Response Unit is ready for action, although the 35 team members hope they see little other than the training runs they have been on recently. Designed to swoop in and rescue stranded boaters, catch unsuspecting river criminals and find those who like to evade the system by doing things such as dumping trash along the 'Hooch, the team has already made several cases.

"The team was established for multiple reasons but came about as a result of the major flooding seen in Sandy Springs back in 2009," said Sandy Springs Fire Rescue Assistant Chief Mark Duke. "The primary focus is responding to river and flood emergencies within our city, but the team will be used for policing criminal activity in addition to staging during major events along the river. Since police and fire began operations, we have responded to several minor incidents. The Water Response Team, shared between police and fire, was the best option, and it will be a valuable recourse for the City once it is in full operation by year's end."

All members of the Unit are trained in boat safety and shore/water basic operations. They will also be trained in boat operations, taught by National Park Service personnel. The boat, made by Rescue One, can travel 34 miles per hour, and is quite shallow, so it can navigate this area of the river. It doesn't use a propeller but rather a jet engine. The boat also has the ability to connect to other boats to form a floating platform, which would be used in the event of a multi-jurisdictional emergency. The cost of the boat was \$23,000.

The Unit will respond to law enforcement calls, boater assistance calls, special events and general calls for assistance. The team will cover the area from the I-285 Bridge over the Chattahoochee but will have special patrol emphasis north of Morgan Falls Dam to Georgia 400.

## City Opens First New Park

More than 350 residents and visitors celebrated the grand opening of Morgan Falls Overlook Park—the City's newest park on Wednesday, July 28, 2010. A ribbon cutting with the Mayor, Councilmembers, dignitaries, staff and other guests kicked off the event and then the group also celebrated the City's Fifth Anniversary Celebration with cheers from numerous well wishers.

The new 30+-acre riverside park features a boat dock, playground, walking trails, restrooms, a large picnic pavilion, handicap accessible swings, a historic chimney and spectacular views from the bluff. On the Overlook Trails, one may see deer, foxes, osprey and heron. And on the water, abundant wildlife may also be seen, such as sandhill cranes, geese, box turtles, otters and ducks.

The area known as Bull Sluice and Morgan Falls has a prominent history. In the early 19th century, the Power family acquired the land in the Georgia land lottery, where it stayed in the family until 1902, when it was deeded to the S. Morgan Smith Company and



*Overlook Park, the City's newest park, opened on Wednesday, July 28, 2010. More than 350 guests attended the ribbon cutting and fifth anniversary celebration. Pictured are Councilmembers John Paulson, Dianne Fries, Ashley Jenkins, Mayor Eva Galambos, Councilmembers Karen Meinen McEnery and Tibby DeJulio, City Manager John McDonough and City Attorney Wendell Willard.*

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# Leathers to Retire



Community Development Director Nancy Leathers (standing) assists Planner Doug Trettin (left) with a customer in the Permitting area. Leathers, who has been in her role as Director with the City since day one, will be retiring on November 1, 2010.

When Nancy Leathers took the position as Community Development Director for the “new” City of Sandy Springs five years ago, she wanted to be known as someone who carried out the vision of the Mayor and Councilmembers as well as someone who did the best possible job for them while making sure efficient, customer friendly procedures were in place for the City. Now, she just wants to be known as Grandma. On November 1, 2010, Leathers will retire to spend more time with her family, travel and enjoy life in Athens, Ga., where she has maintained a home the past five years.

Nancy says she is excited about how things have gone these past five years and her department has much to be proud. “When the city took over from Fulton County, not only did we have a long period of neglect, we also had 800 permits that were unfinished,” said Leathers. “We had a hectic start but within two years, we cleared out the backlog and put in place simpler procedures. Not only did we become more efficient, we became more customer friendly.”

“In the first year and a half, the Mayor and Council adopted the Comprehensive Plan. Although it’s not yet perfect—it’s our own and it’s a significant step toward what we want. We also passed a tree conservation ordinance, which preserves and expands the City’s tree canopy. It’s been positive for the community, and it’s forward looking. The last issue is, with the onset of the recession, we initiated the Vacant Property Enforcement Program (VPEP) and successfully addressed the issue of property maintenance by owners who could not sell or reside in their properties,” Leathers added.

Of her proudest accomplishments, Leathers said her work with the Mayor and Councilmembers to carry out the vision of the City was the best, followed by putting together a great team of professionals to carry out the work of the City. “It’s great to be in an atmosphere where everyone is doing what’s best for the city,” Leathers concluded.

*New Park, continued from previous page*

the Atlanta Water and Electric Company. Just after the turn of the century, Morgan Falls Dam was built, and it began generating electricity in 1904. In 1912, the Georgia Railway and Power Company—the forerunner of Georgia Power—bought the land and the hydroplant.

In 1990, Georgia Power sold 27 acres of the land to Fulton County for a park. In 2001, the Sandy Springs Conservancy began a grassroots effort to build a riverside park. Two years later, the group had created a masterplan for the area. By then, the City had been created and the park land had been conveyed to the City, who enlarged the plan and moved forward with its implementation.

The picnic pavilion is available for private parties. For more information on Overlook Park, or to book the picnic pavilion, call 770-730-5600.



Stormwater Manager David Chastant and Recreation and Parks Director Ronnie Young answer questions from a resident. The Festival, which turns 25 this year, is a great time to meet the City’s elected officials, speak with staff and learn about public safety initiatives. This year’s Festival is September 25-26, 2010, at Heritage Green.

## Sandy Springs Festival Turns 25

This year’s Sandy Springs Festival will be held September 25-26, 2010. The event is a yearly fundraiser benefiting Heritage Sandy Springs, a non-profit organization serving the community. This year, the Festival turns 25, and the two-day event features live entertainment, children’s games and rides, crafters, an artist market, collector car show, the pet parade and more! The event kicks off with a 10K road race, which is a Peachtree Road Race qualifier. Stop by the City’s booth for information on programs, the new Overlook park, to meet elected officials, firefighters and police officers, get a commemorative pin and sign up to be a Sandy Springer! The City contracts with Heritage Sandy Springs for operation of the park. For more information, visit [www.sandyspringsfestival.com](http://www.sandyspringsfestival.com).





*More than six miles of sidewalks have been constructed since the City's inception. At present, there are eight active sidewalk projects in the City.*

*Sidewalks, continued from page 1*

Roswell Road from Dalrymple north to Roberts Drive. Utility coordination and permitting is underway. Most of the areas eligible for this Community Development Block Grant funded project are on the eastern (northbound) side of Roswell Road with some segments on the west side of Roswell Road.

#### **Windsor Parkway Sidewalks**

Construction has begun for the sidewalk project on the north side of Windsor Parkway from Roswell Road to High Point Road. Utility relocation is underway and construction is planned to begin this month.

#### **Sidewalk Program Design: Pitts Road; Dalrymple; Tennis Center; Library; and Mt. Vernon Highway at Hammond Drive**

The project design is underway and construction will begin this fall. Construction is planned this year with construction bidding to begin soon. Right of way, easement acquisition and utility coordination are underway.

#### **Sidewalk Program Design: Glenridge-Hammond to Johnson Ferry and Mt. Vernon Highway to Abernathy; Spalding Drive-Mt. Vernon Highway to Nesbit Ferry Road**

The project design is underway. Construction is planned for later this year with construction bidding to begin soon. Right of way, easement acquisition and utility coordination are underway.

#### **Sidewalk Program Design: Glenridge-Roswell Road to Northland and Royervista to High Point; Mt. Paran-Long Island to Powers Ferry; and Long Island-Roswell Road to Mt. Paran Road**

The project design is underway. Right of way and utility coordination are underway.

**We hope you are proud to be a Sandy Springer. Here are a few photos that grabbed our attention and made us proud. We hope they will make you proud, too!**



*The new Peachtree-Dunwoody Road bridge*



*Morgan Falls Overlook Park opening*



*Championship Sandy Springs Storm team member*



*National Night Out 2010*



## **Contact Us**

**Sandy Springs Web site: [www.sandyspringsga.org](http://www.sandyspringsga.org)**

**Sandy Springs Citizen Response Center: 770.730.5600**